

Appendix D

Soil Moisture Protocol

Protocol for determining operability of soils (based on soil moisture at 4-8" depth)

Protocol for determining operability of soils				
Soil Moisture % Increases Downward	Coarse Soils	Light Soils	Med. Soils (<35% clay)	Heavy Soils (>35% clay)
	Loamy sands, fine sandy loam, very fine sands, coarse sands	Fine sandy loams, sandy loams, very fine sandy loam	Sandy clay loam, loam, silt loam, sandy clay loam, clay loam	Clay loam, sandy clay, silty clay loam, clay
Dry soils	Dry, loose, single grained flows thru fingers	Dry, loose, flows thru fingers	Powdery, dry, sometimes slightly crusted but breaks down into powdery conditions	Hard, baked, cracked sometimes has loose crumbs on surface
Moist soil	Still appears dry, will not form a ball with pressure	Still appears to be dry; will not form a ball	Somewhat crumbly, but will hold together from pressure	Somewhat pliable; will form ball under pressure. At plastic limit.
Moist soil	Still appears dry, will not form a ball with pressure	Tends to ball under pressure but seldom will hold together	Forms a ball and is very pliable, sticks readily if high in clay.	Easily ribbons out between fingers, has a slick feeling. At plastic limit.
Very moist soil	Tends to stick together slightly, sometimes forms a very weak ball	Forms a weak ball that breaks easily, will not stick. Plastic limit or nonplastic.	Forms a ball and is very pliable, sticks readily if high in clay. Exceeds plastic limit.	Easily ribbons out between fingers, has a slick feeling. Exceeds plastic limit.
Wet soils	Upon squeezing, free water may appear. Wet outline is left on hand. Nonplastic.	Upon squeezing free water may appear. Wet outline left on hand.	Can squeeze out free water. Wet outline left on hand.	Puddles and free water forms on surface. Wet outline left on hand.
Note: Denotes "Recommended not operable"				